

# Annual Report

ON

## THE HEALTH

OF THE

### Borough of Sandwich,

FOR THE YEAR

**1920.**



**JOHN W. HARRISSON, M.B.,**  
Medical Officer of Health.



# THE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT OF SANDWICH.

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## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1920.

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MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—

In accordance with the General Order, I beg to submit the Annual Report on Public Health and Sanitary Conditions of this Urban District (Sandwich) based upon the Instructions received from the Ministry of Health. The Report is for the year ending 31st Dec., 1920.

The population given by census of 1911 was 3040, and I believe a fairly correct estimate for 1920 would be 3300. The Registrar General gives estimated population for birth-rate purposes as 3284, for death-rate 3153. The occupations in the town are chiefly those of an agricultural urban town, and no injurious trades are present.

The total number of deaths registered within the Borough during the year was 34, and number of deaths transferred to us from public institutions (including Union Infirmary) was 9. Two of the deaths within the Borough were notified as accidental (one by drowning, the other fall from a horse) this leaves the number 32 as due to normal causes. Of the nine deaths transferred to us (as recent residents) two were caused by accident, one by drowning, the other from effects of explosion, which leaves the number of deaths due to disease or age as seven from outside sources. The death-rate per thousand registered within the District is 9.6; the rate per thousand transferred to us as Residents dying outside the boundary is 2.1 per

thousand; yielding a total death-rate of 11.7 per thousand, as compared with 12 per thousand shown last year. As in the year 1919, half the deaths within the Borough occurred in those over 70 (the oldest being 92) or under 12 months of age. The causes of death in infants under 12 months of age were certified as : Hernia 1, Whooping Cough 2, Prematurity 2, Weakness 1. This number yields a death-rate per thousand of 1.8.

During the first quarter of the year ten deaths were registered, eleven in the second, nine in the third and four in the last.

Circumstances have not permitted any further development of the proposed new Drainage Scheme, which remains in abeyance, as it did during the war period, but the old system has been made more efficient during the past year by fuller and more systematic flushing and by cleansing the open waterway. The sewage is eventually discharged into the tidal River Stour.

There is and has been throughout the year a constant and ample supply of pure water of good quality delivered from the Corporation Water-works two miles outside the town. It is derived from a borehole in the chalk with little or no possibility of contamination. A sample was sent to the County Analyst's Laboratory in March (1920) and found to be satisfactory, with the remark : "This water is of excellent organic quality."

So far as closet accommodation is concerned, it is estimated that rather more than one half of the houses are provided with water closet system and the remainder privy pail system. No complaints have been received; the scavenging is satisfactory; regular removal of house refuse, earth closets, &c., has been carried out by Corporation employees,

which is taken by them in covered carts one mile away from the town. All dustbins are movable and emptied twice each week.

The Sanitary Inspector's Report shows that 60 inspections were made during the year, 21 nuisances complained of (or found on inspection) were dealt with; 45 visits were made for re-inspection in dealing with the abatement of these nuisances; 14 of the 21 nuisances found were due to defective house drains. They were all eventually put in a sanitary condition.

One statutory notice was served by him during the twelve months and twenty informal notices. All the suggested and necessary improvements were made without further action becoming necessary.

No demolition order was given, and no voluntary demolition found to be needed.

No offensive trades are carried on in the town, and there are but few lodging-houses. None were overcrowded; no underground or basement sleeping rooms are to be found in the town.

Under Housing Act 22 inspections were made; eight informal and one formal notice was served; 15 re-inspections were made. The necessary work was found to have been executed—except in two cases—one of which is still under observation, and the other is being dealt with under the Act. No closing order was made.

The standard of some of the older cottages is low, but little or no overcrowding exists at the present time. Many dilapidations held over during the war have now been made good, 9 houses having been put in proper repair during 1920.

The sanitary condition and water supply of

the Public Elementary Schools is satisfactory, and the general health of the children has maintained a good average character. No notification of infectious disease occurring in any of these children was received, and the small amount of zymotic disease present in the town during the year has fortunately not necessitated closure or much exclusion from such causes.

The milk is supplied almost entirely by dairy farmers in the neighbouring rural district; much of it is distributed in glass bottles. The supply has been adequate and quality good; no complaints have been received. There is one small cowshed in the district; both it and the milk shops have been reported by the Inspector as being in a satisfactory condition and the occupiers complying with the regulations. One storage place for milk was condemned as unsuitable during the year, and other accommodation found which was approved of.

As a consequence of food inspection a small quantity of meat was condemned, and one local butcher having notified his suspicion of a carcase as being unsound, an examination was made, and as result it was certified as unfit for food (total amount condemned 150lbs.).

The following samples of food, &c., were taken by Police Authority and analyzed: — New Milk (7), Butter, Jam, Cocoa, Lard, Tea, Tapioca, Rum, Gin, Rice, Mustard, Sago, Whiskey. All were genuine except 3 samples of milk, two being deficient in fat, one diluted with water. The latter case was dismissed at Court; the remaining two were fined. Gin was also found 43.78 under-proof, and a fine of £10 imposed.

The condition of the Bakehouses and

Slaughter-houses is reported by the Sanitary Inspector as being found to be in a clean and sanitary state. A properly constructed Public Abattoir is to be desired. No official is present to inspect meat at time of slaughter, but on account of the very general use of imported meat there has been considerably less demand for home-killed food.

There has fortunately been very little zymotic or notifiable infectious disease in this Urban District, 9 cases being reported: Tuberculosis 4, Scarlet Fever 4, Influenza and Pneumonia 1. The Scarlet Fever cases could not be isolated at home and were all sent to Isolation Hospital. They were present in three households. The first case occurred in a girl who was a maid in an Infectious Hospital and just returned home. The second was known to have been in contact with a member of a household in which Scarlet Fever was present. Two persons in this family suffered. The origin of the third case was not so clear, but there was a strong suspicion that it was developed by contact with an unattended mild case which received no medical attention. There were no deaths due to zymotic disease.

Mumps and Whooping Cough were present in February and March to a considerable extent. Whooping Cough caused the death of two young children. A few cases of measles appeared in the town. They were evidently contact cases from children of the adjoining Rural District, where the disease was prevalent; but fortunately it did not spread in the Urban District. Influenza caused one death during the year.

No primary or re-vaccinations were made during the year by the Medical Officer of Health, and no Rabies or Anthrax was reported. Cases

of Tuberculosis are notified by the local doctors, and the services of the Medical Officer attending the Tuberculosis Centre in this town are much appreciated.

Venereal Disease is not very prevalent in the town. No special action is taken by the Council, but advice and notices with regard to treatment are posted in various public places as suggested by the County Medical Officer.

The Midwife is inspected by the County Council as supervising authority, and her work is excellent. After engagement she keeps the expectant mother under observation by visiting her, &c. After her attendance ceases the infant passes to the care of the Health Visitor, who takes charge until the child arrives at school age, when it passes into the hands of the School Nurse.

The Health Visitor's work is now generally recognised as exceedingly helpful and beneficial. Much time, tact, and attention is given to it; 1188 visits were paid by her during the year. She also attends with the nurses the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, a voluntary work undertaken by ladies in the town, occupying a house hired by the Corporation, which is open weekly for weighing and inspection of infants, and monthly consultations are also held by a Medical Officer appointed by the Centre for that purpose. The average weekly attendance of mothers with their infants is 30.

The number of births during the year was 76 (one of these being illegitimate)—37 males, 39 females. This number yields a birth-rate per thousand of 23, compared with 21.3 for the year 1919. There were no cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum in any of these babies, and no Puerperal Fever was reported, but one child was notified as still-born.

The Sanitary Inspector is a most capable and efficient man. He acts also as Inspector of Nuisances, Borough Surveyor, Harbour Master, &c., which of course keep him well in touch with all town affairs, but keep him very fully occupied. Besides the M.O.H. there are no other sanitary officials.

The Hospital accommodation for infectious diseases (including Small-Pox) is arranged for with the Isolation Hospital for Infectious Diseases in the Rural District, situated in Eastry, 2 miles from Sandwich. There is a Scarlet Fever block—12 beds including cot, Enteric or Diphtheria block for 11 beds, also accommodation for 2 more cases of any kind in another block. As regards Local Acts, special Local Orders, or general adoptive Acts, the Public Health Act, 1890, parts 2, 3, 4, are adopted, and Local Act 27 George III. (67) is in force.

There is no unhealthy area, but the sites of a few old houses are somewhat insanitary and are kept under observation by the Authority, and in the meantime some effort has been made which temporarily improves them.

Land has been purchased by the Corporation in the outskirts of the town sufficient for erection of 100 houses, and at the present time plans of construction have been prepared for building 50 of these houses. Progress will be made when final approval of Central Housing Authority is received.

At the present time the town is in a normal and satisfactory, healthy condition, and its sick and mortality rate give no evidence of any unhygienic state. Like most towns (especially the old ones) many improvements and developments

are certainly desirable, but they can quite well remain in abeyance until the financial and general state of the country justify the expenditure and the present post war burdens are somewhat relieved.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN W. HARRISSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1920.

PORT SANITARY AUTHORITY,

SANDWICH.

25th March, 1921.

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—

During the year 1920 the Port has been little used except for the return of military stores, &c., from France, as was the case in the year 1919.

Apart from this work the Harbour Master reported the arrival of 38 vessels from Foreign Ports; 8 of these bringing cargoes of broken stone, and 30 arrived without cargo, in order to export Kent coal to France. These vessels were inspected and the conditions found to be satisfactory. No cases of infectious or other disease were reported.

As is so frequently the case, one sailor was accidentally drowned in the river during the year.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN W. HARRISSON,

Port Medical Officer.